

Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River Council
Regular Monthly Meeting
August 20, 2003

Meeting Called to Order at 7:00PM by Rick Coe, Chairperson

Role Call by Belinda Irizarry

Board Members in Attendance: Julie Akers (Buena Vista Township), John Brudon (Estell Manor), Bill Christman (Hamilton Township), Rick Coe (Monroe Township), Dick Colby (Treasurer and GEHWA alternate) Greg Gregory (Somers Point), Andrew Mair (Winslow Township), Bill McDermott (Upper Township), Creed Pogue (GEHWA), and Joel Spiegel (Folsom).

Board Members Absent: Gene Betz (Corbin City), Bill Eagan (Weymouth Twp), Keith Kendrix (Hammonton), and Marc Thyrring (Egg Harbor Twp.)

Quorum Present? --Yes

Others Present: Fred Akers (River Administrator), Belinda Irizarry (Outreach Coordinator)

Proceedings

Rick Coe stated that the meeting was advertised pursuant to the NJ Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq. Notices were sent to official publications for the River Council – The Courier Post and The Press of Atlantic City. A copy of the notice was posted on the bulletin board of the Fox Nature Center and the Atlantic County Library in Mays Landing. An affidavit of publication from the Courier Post was received.

Public Portion

A motion to open the public portion of the meeting was approved. No one from the public was present to make public comments, so a motion to close the public portion was approved.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the July 16, 2003 meeting. Dick Colby asked for a clarification of the scope of the \$1000 indemnification referred to in the minutes. Julie Akers provided the clarification. Hearing no further changes or discussion, the vote occurred and the minutes were approved as written.

Old Business

River Administrator's Report

Fred Akers presented a status update of the WMA-15 contract conclusion between Atlantic County and the NJDEP. Fred has been continuing to work with both Atlantic County and the DEP on watershed management issues. Atlantic County has been taking

very strong actions to preserve open space in the watershed, and has initiated negotiations with the EHT PAL to acquire a property that they now own in the Betsy Scull area. Fred is in the process of making application in partnership with Stockton for funding from the DEP to study and characterize the stormwater and water quality issues on Adams Branch below the Atlantic City Race Track and the Hamilton Mall. Atlantic County is also very interested in this project and may become a partner as well.

Fred continues to work with the other Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers organizations to achieve an increase in Federal Appropriations of \$600,000 for this program. Fred has been in contact with Congressman LoBiondo's office to insure that the Congressman is aware of the issue, as the increase has been approved by the Senate for 2004, but not by Congress so far.

Fred also indicated a need for Information Technology resources to better present the W&S graphic information to municipalities to reinforce their partnership participation. He demonstrated the old 30"x36" paper base maps with mylar overlays that were initially presented to each municipality at the end of the study process in the mid 1990's. This system is difficult to see and clumsy to use, and this information needs to be developed into powerpoint presentations to be periodically presented to each municipality. Powerpoint presentations will require an investment of approximately \$5000 for a laptop computer and multimedia projector to implement. Most of the River Councilors in attendance have never seen the paper maps and overlays, and never knew that they existed.

Financial Report

The Council reviewed the latest Cooperative Agreement Update furnished by Mary Vavra of the National Parks Service. A discussion was undertaken about potential project ideas for application of the \$9,986 untargeted balance. The following is a summary of the ideas presented:

1. Funding for signs, which could include supplementing the County's efforts.
2. Weekend overtime for municipal Zoning Officers to investigate riparian zoning violations during weekend hours.
3. Natural resource inventory/bird study in the river corridor.
4. Natural resource inventory/fish study in the non-tidal river corridor.
5. Birding guide or book of open space listings.
6. Development of River Council web pages on the GEHWA website.
7. Assist municipalities in getting DOT grants for trails and overlooks.
8. Create a guidebook for dock construction and bank stabilization.

After considerable discussion, Rick Coe, along with Andy Mair, suggested that the River Council should offer to fund grant writing and other services to municipalities for municipal projects and services. Creed Pogue suggested that \$2000 of the untargeted balance should be obligated for a baseline fish data report before the new fish ladder is installed, and the balance would go to services to municipalities. A motion was made

and seconded to reflect this conclusion, a vote occurred, and the motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Personnel Evaluation Committee Recommendations.

Creed Pogue presented that the Personnel Committee will finish its evaluation of the River Administrator after Labor Day.

Sign Finalization Update

Fred Akers will create a list of possible sign location sites for the entire river and present the list for consideration at the September meeting.

Board Member Indemnification

Rick Coe presented a draft letter concerning indemnification that each River Councilor could send to their municipality to determine their personal liability coverage as an appointee. The draft letter was reviewed, and proposed changes were offered

Draft Statement Regarding Public Input at River Council Meetings.

Rick Coe presented a draft of a written statement that would be read before the public comment portion of the meetings. The purpose of the statement is to communicate to the public the River Councils scope of authority and responsibility. The wording of the draft as written was unanimously approved, and it was recommended that it should be reviewed by Mary Vavra for consistency with the NPS and the CMP.

Form for Soliciting and Reviewing Potential Projects.

Andy Mair presented a draft application form to be used for requests to the River Council for funding. The Council discussed the requirements of potential applicants and the wording of the form. Mr. Mair was commended by the Chair for this very professional and comprehensive effort. Minor changes will be made to the draft, which will be resubmitted at the September meeting.

River Council Mission Review and Bylaw Revision Recommendations

A discussion of the River Council mission and bylaws was conducted. The discussion touched on liability issues for River Councilors and types of insurance coverage. Employee management and liability was discussed. The personal liability to the River Councilors for any actions that the River Administrator takes on behalf of GEHWA was brought up as a concern. Julie Akers recommended funds be obligated to hire a lawyer to make recommendations on coverage. Rick Coe offered to seek liability insurance advice from an outside party he knows who is qualified.

New Business

River Council Web Pages

Fred Akers asked the River Council if they wanted to be represented on the new GEHWA website. Finding out that the answer was yes, he then asked what the Council would like to see on their web pages. Some of the suggestions included; who we are, membership listing, mission and bylaws, meeting schedules, accomplishments, and the grant application form.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 pm.